

Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd

Health and Safety Policy, Organisation and Arrangements

Record of Amendments and Updates		
Date	Details	Initials
13 December 2021	Added reference to industry guidance TG3 where applicable.	<i>DB</i>
28 March 2022	Added reference to FISA608 – Tree Shears and Grapple Saws.	<i>DB</i>
29 March 2022	Updated the arrangements for the use of top-handled chainsaws.	<i>DB</i>
14 September 2022	Updated the arrangement for breaking the surface of the ground.	<i>DB</i>
6 December 2022	Updated the arrangement for health surveillance to include annual hearing tests.	<i>DB</i>
4 January 2023	Added further detail to the arrangements to comply with CDM.	<i>DB</i>
15 January 2024	Policy Reviewed	<i>RB</i>
22 January 2025	Policy Reviewed	<i>RB</i>

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Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd

Health and Safety – Statement of Policy

This policy has been documented to clearly show high level commitment to providing and maintaining safe and healthy work conditions, equipment, and safe systems of work.

We shall use the guidance set out in ISO45001: 2018 to help us to operate an OH&S Management System.

There shall be a zero-tolerance attitude towards unsafe acts with breaches of the Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd policy, procedure and guidance being treated as a disciplinary offence.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy shall be:

- To promote acceptable standards of health, safety, and welfare within Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant statutory provisions.
- To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health.
- To create and maintain safe and healthy places of work for all employees and to ensure that the safety and health of persons other than employees are not adversely affected by our work activity.
- To ensure that staff at all levels are provided with adequate information, instruction, training, and supervision.
- To ensure all employees are competent to undertake their tasks.
- To develop safety awareness and responsible attitudes at all levels.
- To promote a joint consultation approach on health and safety matters.
- To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment.
- To ensure safe handling and use of substances.
- To ensure sufficient funds are available to implement this statement.
- To review and revise this policy, organisation, and arrangements manual as necessary and at regular intervals not exceeding 12 months.

This policy shall apply to the directors, employees and contractors engaged by Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd and shall be applied throughout the range of services undertaken by the company:

- Commercial grounds maintenance and tree services
- Domestic tree services
- Firewood processing

The Directors recognise that it is their responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of the contents of this statement and that safe systems of work are provided and maintained on all work sites. Suitable and sufficient financial and physical resources shall be made available to ensure and maintain the health, safety and welfare of themselves, employees and others who may be affected by their undertakings.

The Directors shall manage Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd in line with current legislation, guidance and accepted best practice and shall ensure that all foreseeable hazards are identified, arising risk is evaluated, and suitable and sufficient controls are put in place to ensure and maintain a healthy and safe working environment.

The Directors shall undertake to provide suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training, and supervision as is deemed necessary by the regulatory and enforcing authorities to enable the implementation of this policy.

The Directors shall actively seek the involvement and co-operation of all stakeholders in making Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd a safe place to work. Employees shall be encouraged to elect and appoint a Safety Representative in order to show that there shall be no adverse treatment of any person reporting concerns over any aspect of working conditions.

The Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd structure chart shall detail the usual reporting lines within the company, but it is stressed that anybody at any time shall be granted uninterrupted access to the Directors for the discussion or reporting of any concerns over health, safety, or welfare arrangements.

This policy shall be maintained as the business changes in size and nature and following any other significant change.

Analysis of accident, incident and near miss occurrences and trends shall enable the safety management system to be continuously improved.


The Directors shall take responsibility for the monitoring of the success and progress of the safety management system and shall appoint a competent advisor to provide advice and investigation when required.

This Health and Safety Policy shall be continually monitored for effectiveness. It shall be reviewed in the light of any incident that may have implications for the policy or on the suggestion of any stakeholder.

In the absence of any significant change, this document shall be reviewed at least annually.

The Directors shall be ultimately responsible for all aspects of Health and Safety and for reviewing the policy and ensuring that it is complied with.

Employees shall be responsible for day-to-day compliance and their own personal safety. Any incidents, injuries or suggestions shall be reported to the Directors.

Signed	
Name	Daniel Burton
Position	Managing Director
Date	22 January 2025

Organisation

Specific responsibilities have been noted against each H&S arrangement using the following titles and definitions:

Responsible Person	An individual who is ultimately legally responsible for all activities under their control.
Competent Person	Individual(s) responsible for ensuring operations are managed and undertaken safely and that the work environment is controlled.
Proficient Operator	Skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced operator (s) able to perform specific tasks.

General Responsibilities	
Dan Burton Managing Director	<p>Overall Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To exercise independent judgment • To exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence • Ensuring resources are available to meet the Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd responsibilities • Ensuring that policies, procedures, and control measures are reviewed and that revisions are agreed and communicated throughout the organisation • To seek advice from the health and safety advisor when necessary
Rebecca Burton Operations Director	<p>Assurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping up to date with legislation and requirements • Ensuring inspections and records are up to date • Ensuring that all reported defects are actioned in a timely manner • Acting as a conduit between all stakeholders so allowing Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd to meet its legal responsibilities • Ensuring co-operation and co-ordination • Site safety checks • Control of temporary workers and sub-contractors • To implement the advice of the health and safety advisor
Team Leaders	<p>Day to day leadership and supervision of health and safety compliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring method statements and risk assessments are in order and are followed • Reporting any proposed change to the planned safe system of work to the office for approval • Completion of daily site-specific risk assessments • Ensuring that work is to the required standard • Reporting any defective systems/equipment that could prejudice the safe system of work • Reporting undesirable circumstances, near misses and accidents • Ensuring that PPE is used by all staff on the team and by site visitors as appropriate
Operators	<p>Day to day health and safety compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work safely following national / Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd guidelines • To only operate vehicles, plant, and equipment that they have been trained and authorised to use • To keep vehicles, plant, and equipment in good order • To report any conditions that could prejudice the safe system of work to the team leader
Elcoat Ltd External advisers	The provision of advice and investigation when asked.

Arrangements

This section defines the standards and rules which relate to all employees whilst at work. It is the responsibility of all employees to observe these rules and behave in a safe and reasonable manner whilst at work.

It must be noted that disciplinary action shall be taken against employees who persistently and deliberately flout the requirements placed upon them by statutory provisions and by Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd safety rules.

It must be borne in mind that a breach of Health and Safety legislation by an employee is a criminal offence and action may be taken by the Police and the Health and Safety Executive.

The Managing Director recognises that it is not possible to prepare in written form every safety rule laid down by the Company as circumstances may vary depending upon the nature of the work. However, employees are expected to act in a sensible manner and adhere to verbal instruction given by Management.

All employees regardless of position within Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd have a duty imposed upon them by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

This duty includes:

- Take responsible care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their work
- Co-operate with the Directors in the measures taken to safeguard health and safety at work
- Report to a person in authority any defects which adversely affect health and safety at work
- Be aware of the Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd safety arrangements, statutory provisions, and the company's safety procedures

Unsafe individuals may be suspended from the work site until further notice.

Abrasive Wheels and other Rotating Equipment

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Dan Burton Managing Director	Dan Burton Managing Director	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

No person shall use abrasive wheels unless they are qualified to do so.

Abrasive wheels and rotating equipment must be guarded, and operators must wear eye and hearing protection.

Operators must ensure that they are wearing close fitting outerwear without any cords or parts that may snag on the equipment.

Long hair must be tied back.

Abrasive wheels shall be checked for damage and excessive side wear prior to use.

Access to Information

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Dan Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	N/A

It is essential that the officers of the company firstly understand the requirements placed upon them by legislation and secondly that they have access to the information and guidance available to help them to manage their undertakings in line with those requirements.

The following resources shall be available:

Compliance Register	A maintained list of legislative and contract requirements
Company Library (Electronic)	Electronic file folders containing internal and external guidance material
Company Library (Hard Copy)	Books Industry Standards HSE Guidance Industry Guidance
Arrangements for competent advice	Managers have access to industry specialist health, safety and environmental advice from Elcoat Ltd
Web based sources of information and guidance	www.hse.gov.uk www.legislation.gov.uk www.trees.org.uk (Arboricultural Association)

The specific arrangements in this section of the manual shall be read with reference to the documents available as above and with due regard to the legislation listed in the compliance register. Where available, the compliance register shall contain a web link to the source of the requirement and / or reference to the storage location of any hard copy document.

The following industry guidance shall be accessible for reference:

Ref.	Title
BS3998	Recommendations for Tree Work (2010)
ICoP	Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture – Tree Work at Height
AA TG 1	Technical Guide - Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue
AA SG 1	Safety Guide - Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue
AA TG 2	Technical Guide - Use of Tools in the Tree
AA SG 2	Safety Guide - Use of Tools in the Tree
AA TG 3	Technical Guide – Rigging and Dismantling
AA SG 3	Safety Guide – Rigging and Dismantling
AA TG 4	Technical Guide - Use of Mobile Cranes in Tree Work
AA SG 4	Safety Guide - Use of Mobile Cranes in Tree Work
AA TG 5	Technical Guide - Use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms in Tree Work
AA SG 5	Safety Guide - Use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms in Tree Work
FISA 202	Application of Pesticides Using Handheld Equipment
FISA 203	Clearing Saw
FISA 204	Flails and Mulchers in Tree Work
FISA 301	Using Petrol Driven Chainsaws
FISA 302	Basic Chainsaw Felling and Manual Takedown
FISA 304	Chainsaw Cross Cutting and Manual Stacking

FISA 306	Chainsaw Clearance of Windblow
FISA 307	Chainsaw Felling of Large Trees
FISA 310	Use of Winches in Directional Felling and Takedown
FISA 601	Mobile Circular Saw Bench
FISA 604	Woodchippers
FISA 606	Stump Grinders
FISA 607	Firewood Processors
FISA 608	Tree Shears and Grapple Saws
FISA 701	ATV Quad Bikes
FISA 702	All-Terrain Vehicles
FISA 704	Excavators in Tree Work
FISA 802	Emergency Planning
FISA 804	Electricity at Work: Forestry and Arboriculture
FISA 805	Training and Certification
FISA 807	Working Near Railways
INDG259	An Introduction to Health and Safety
INDG214	First Aid at Work: Your Questions Answered
INDG229	Using Work Equipment Safely
INDG362	Noise at Work
INDG363	Protect Your Hearing or Lose It
INDG175	Control the Risks form Hand-Arm Vibration
INDG296	Hand-Arm Vibration – Advice for Employees
INDG401	Work at Height Regulations 2005 – A Brief Guide for Employers
INDG402	Safe Use of Ladders and Step Ladders – An Employers Guide
INDG317	Chainsaws at Work
ISO	45001 – Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Dan Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All safety critical staff shall be briefed on these arrangements during induction training

Substance abuse, the use of illegal drugs, the misuse of prescribed drugs, the abuse of alcohol, solvents or similar, that can impair a user's judgement and ability to work safely can lead to unacceptable levels of risk to themselves, others, and the environment.

Employees reporting for work in an unfit state due to any of the above shall be suspended until such a time that they are fit to work again.

Disciplinary action may result.

Asbestos

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

There are three main types of asbestos still found in premises. These are commonly called blue asbestos (crocidolite), brown asbestos (amosite) and white asbestos (chrysotile) All are dangerous but the blue and brown are more so than the white. They cannot be identified just by their colour.

There are many building materials that could be encountered that may contain asbestos (ACM – Asbestos Containing Materials) such as corrugated roofing, wall insulation and ceiling tiles and if these are broken or disturbed, they could release asbestos fibres.

Breathing in air containing asbestos fibres can lead to asbestos-related diseases, mainly cancers of the lung and chest lining. There is usually a long delay between first exposure to asbestos and the onset of disease of 15-60 years.

ACM's must be included on the site-specific risk assessment if present on a proposed worksite.

If working around asbestos roofs or if discovering fly tipped waste which could be ACM on a worksite, you must inform the office immediately so that appropriate advice can be sought.

It is best to assume that materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that it does not.

The company shall maintain both risk and COSHH assessments for asbestos and all operators shall be briefed in the procedure to be adopted if ACM's are encountered.

If any member of staff or site visitor suspects that there is an asbestos risk arising from the work you **MUST** down tools, leave the area immediately and report the situation to the office.

You **MUST NOT** re-enter the contaminated area until you have been told that it is safe to do so.

Breaking the Surface of the Ground

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	Seb Lacey

Certain aspects of operations shall require digging or other breaking of the surface of the ground for example when planting, stump grinding or erecting fence posts.

Care shall be taken to avoid contacting or damaging buried services. Operators must also remain vigilant to uncovering buried asbestos waste.

Prior to breaking the surface of the ground, the area shall be scanned using cable avoidance equipment and carefully excavated by hand to check for sub-surface features.

In areas of likely service runs information shall be sought from the customer and the statutory undertaker.

Dial Before You Dig

The Dial Before You Dig service will:

- Reduce the risk of injury to site workers.
- Help avoid costly damage to underground plant.
- Prevent disruption of services vital to the community.
- Help avoid expensive delays to completing your work.

England

National Grid can be contacted in the following ways:

Online request – Linesearch before you dig - <https://lsbud.co.uk/>

Email – plantprotection@cadentgas.com

Call – Plant Protection for free on 0800 688 588

Write to:

National Grid Plant Protection,
Brick Kiln Street,
Hinckley,
Leicestershire,
LE10 0NA

Climbing and Lifting Equipment

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey / Josh Crackett Team Leader/ Climber	Sebastian Lacey / Josh Crackett Team Leader/ Climber

Reference shall be made to:

- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005
- AA TG1 – Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue 2020
- AA TG2 – Use of Tools in the Tree 2020
- AA TG3 – Rigging and Dismantling 2021

Climbing and lifting equipment shall only be used for the purpose it was designed for in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

No modifications shall be carried out unless under the instructions of the manufacturer.

Essential details and warning signs shall be in place at all times.

All climbing and lifting equipment shall be clearly marked to be identifiable.

Climbing and lifting equipment shall be checked, inspected, maintained, and serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and the provisions of PUWER and LOLER.

A register of all equipment kept shall be maintained showing details of history, servicing, repair and particular areas of wear for specific monitoring.

Daily checks shall be carried out by employees prior to using the equipment.

All climbing and lifting equipment shall be thoroughly examined by a competent person on a 6 and 12 monthly cycle as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the employee using any equipment to report any defects in the equipment as soon as they become apparent. Arrangements shall be put in place by the manager to repair or withdraw the equipment.

Withdrawn equipment shall be clearly marked as such and shall not be used until repaired or the equipment disposed of.

Rules in relation to climbing and lifting equipment in response to incidents, observations and industry news and trends:

- The tail on self-tied prussic knots must be longer than four times the diameter of the cord being used.
- Prussic loops must be captive on the karabiner using either a lark's foot hitch or an elastic band.
- Captive prussic loops must be untied on a weekly basis so as not to concentrate wear in one place.

Competence and Training

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to specific industry guidance such as:

- FISA 805

All new employees shall receive induction training relating to Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd procedures, health and safety matters and legal obligations.

All employees shall be competent to carry out their duties and shall hold the necessary certification. No one shall carry out any function for which they are not trained or instructed so as to be able to work safely in relation to themselves and others.

When an activity is carried out infrequently the Directors shall ensure that the employee is fully competent prior to him / her carrying out that activity.

A competence matrix shall be maintained to record:

- Personal physical constraints (contact lens wearing or colour blindness for example)
- Levels of authorisation
- Record specific competence, skills, abilities, expiry dates

The matrix shall be reviewed on a regular basis to assess on-going training, refresher requirements and deficiencies. The process shall be informed by safety checks and inspections, feedback from employees and incident histories.

In the event of an employee being involved in a serious near miss or reportable incident that employee may be reassessed, and training organised if appropriate.

Training shall be arranged through appropriate bodies and training providers.

Construction, Design and Management (CDM)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to the:

- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- L153 – Managing Health and Safety in Construction ACoP

A contractor is anyone who directly employs or engages construction workers or manages construction work.

Contractors include sub-contractors, any individual self-employed worker or business that carries out, manages, or controls construction work.

From time to time, we may be deemed to be the contractor under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and as such we understand that we have several specific responsibilities.

As a contractor, we have an important role in planning, managing, and monitoring our work to ensure any risks are controlled.

We shall:

- Make sure that the client is aware of their client duties under CDM 2015 before any work starts.
- Plan, manage and monitor all work that we carry out considering the risks to anyone who might be affected by it (including members of the public) and the measures needed to protect them.
- Check that all of our people have the skills, knowledge, training, and experience to carry out the work, or are in the process of obtaining them.
- Make sure that everyone under their control has a suitable, site-specific induction, unless this has already been provided by the principal contractor.
- Provide appropriate supervision, information, and instructions to everyone under our control.
- Ensure that we do not start work on site unless reasonable steps have been taken to prevent unauthorised access.
- Ensure that suitable welfare facilities are provided for everyone under our control from the start of the work on site and throughout the work.

In addition to the above responsibilities, if we are working on a project involving more than one contractor we shall:

- Coordinate our work with the work of others in the project team.
- Comply with directions given by the principal designer or principal contractor.
- Comply with parts of the construction phase plan that are relevant to our work.

Where we are the only contractor working on a project, we shall ensure that a construction phase plan is drawn up before setting up the site.

When we are working as the only contractor for a domestic client, we shall take on the client duties, as well as our own as contractor. This however should only involve what we would normally do to comply with health and safety law.

Where a domestic project involves more than one contractor, the principal contractor normally takes on the client duties and the contractor will work to the principal contractor as 'client'.

If the domestic client does not appoint a principal contractor, the role of the principal contractor shall be carried out by the contractor as principal contractor and the client duties must be carried out by the contractor in control of the construction phase and the client duties must be carried out by the contractor as principal contractor.

Alternatively, the domestic client can ask the principal designer to take on the client duties (although this must be confirmed in a written agreement), and the contractor must work to them as 'client' under CDM 2015.

We shall apply the general principles of prevention.

These set out the principles that duty holders should use in their approach to identify the measures they should take to control the risks to health and safety in a particular project.

The general principles of prevention are set out in full in Appendix 1 of L153, but in summary they are to:

- Avoid risks where possible.
- Evaluate those risks that cannot be avoided.
- Put in place proportionate measures that control them at source.

Consultation and Communication

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to the:

- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Stakeholder analysis

All employees, associates, part-time self-employed labour, sub-contractors and clients shall have an active part to play in maintaining and improving our safety standards. They shall be consulted on safety issues, risk assessments, procedures, PPE issues and the suitability and use of plant and equipment.

We understand the needs and expectations of interested parties and we have documented a OH&S policy, which is provided to all staff, displayed on the noticeboard and is available to any interested party upon request.

We shall provide mechanisms, time, training, and resources necessary for consultation and participation.

Information about the OH&S management system, identified hazards, risks and controls shall be made available in a timely, clear, understandable way and we shall ensure that there are no barriers to participation.

All employees shall receive induction training to clearly communicate the standards required by the company.

Employees shall be expected to attend the regular consultation and briefing meetings throughout their employment. Records and minutes of these meetings shall be kept for reference.

Information may be broadcast to all staff using our electronic group chat facility and staff shall be encouraged to reply to the information in open forum so that relevant decisions can be made as a team.

Employees shall have access to all relevant safety guides e.g., HSE guides, Data Sheets, Task and Machine Risk Assessments, Site Specific Risk Assessments, and Operating Manuals either on site or in the office or stores as appropriate.

A team file shall be kept in the operational vehicle containing all appropriate paperwork and site information.

A method statement shall be prepared when required:

- To give clear instruction as to the methods to be adopted and the expectations of Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd to its employees, associates, and sub-contractors.
- To give customers and clients sufficient information as to the likely methods of operations to be adopted on their worksites and to foster confidence that the operators of Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd are working in line with current industrial best practice.

A specific method statement shall be prepared which shall give clear and specific instruction as to:

- Access and egress arrangements.
- Anticipated working dates and times.
- Chain of command and contact numbers.
- The expected sequence of events on site.
- Reference to the site-specific risk assessment.
- Site welfare arrangements.
- Emergency planning.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

Hazardous substances include any substance that could cause harm or irritation to employees or others, or harm to the environment. They include fuels, oils, chemicals, pesticides, preservatives or similar.

A master list of all substances hazardous to health shall be maintained and held on the company intranet. This master list shall be reviewed at least annually, and the purchasing process shall identify any additional hazardous substances that enter the company.

Substances considered for use shall be assessed and less harmful substances shall be used wherever practicable.

Assessments and details of their safety precautions shall be made available to employees at the offices and where the substances are stored and used.

MSDS information and COSHH assessments shall be kept on the company intranet.

COSHH assessments shall be displayed at the point of use.

COSHH information shall be held in the team file for reference on the worksite.

Pesticides shall be securely stored, in their original containers, and their usage recorded. Pesticides shall only be mixed and used by trained and certificated personnel.

Rules in relation to hazardous substances:

- All employees must only use substances or products in accordance with the COSHH assessment.
- All substances including products, chemicals, liquids and gasses must be returned to their designated safe storage location when not in use.
- All spills must be cleaned up using the spill control materials as soon as they occur.
- Any waste products, chemicals or oils must be taken to the correct disposal point
- Product labels and other guidance material shall not be defaced or removed.
- Product labels that due to normal wear and tear can no longer be read shall be replaced.

Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres (DSEAR)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002

The company shall be vigilant for any situation where an explosive atmosphere may build up and shall implement appropriate measures to prevent an explosion or fire.

Preventive measures are likely to include ventilation and the enforcement of a no smoking and no naked flames policy in the yard, workshop, and offices.

Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd shall provide the necessary equipment and procedures to deal with accidents and emergencies and provide information and training to staff. Where an explosive atmosphere may occur, these areas shall be zoned, and suitable warnings put in place.

Dermatitis and Skin Irritation

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Certain products and substances such as fuel, oil and tree/shrub sap can irritate the skin.

Dermatitis is a skin condition caused by contact with something that irritates the skin or causes an allergic reaction. It usually occurs where the irritant touches the skin, but not always.

Signs and symptoms of dermatitis could be:

- Redness
- Scaling/flaking
- Blistering
- Weeping
- Cracking
- Swelling
- Itching and pain

Dermatitis can occur quickly after contact with a strong irritant, or over a longer period from repeated contact with weaker irritants. Irritants can be chemical, biological, mechanical, or physical.

Staff must wear gloves when undertaking wet and/or dirty work whenever practicable to do so.

Staff must wash hands before going to the toilet, before eating and following contamination.

All signs of skin irritation must be reported to the office as an incident.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff that have completed the DSE assessment

Reference shall be made to:

- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.

The aim of the Regulations is to ensure that employers and employees take the appropriate action to control any risks associated with the use of such equipment, the most familiar of which is the personal computer used for applications such as word processing.

This policy applies to users of DSE equipment whether used on an occasional or regular basis, in the office or working from home.

It is known that long hours of intense work with badly designed equipment can sometimes cause one or more of these problems in a minority of users.

The principal risks relate to musculo-skeletal problems, visual fatigue, and mental stress.

Problems such as eyestrain are short term in nature and are unlikely to have continuing consequences for long after the work has ceased. However, musculo-skeletal problems caused by rapidly repeated keying or bad posture, for example, can have long-term effects and may be difficult to rectify even if working methods are changed or the work ceases.

All new staff (including home-based and temporary staff) must carry out a workstation self-assessment as soon after induction as possible.

Employees must:

- Ensure that they carry out the DSE self-assessment at least annually and perform any recommended actions.
- Must make all minor alterations to their workstation set-up to resolve minor issues immediately.
- Inform their team leader if they are experiencing any pain and discomfort whilst using the DSE

It is very important that staff report any signs of ill-health connected with their work as promptly as possible so that action can be taken to prevent the effects becoming serious or permanent.

Electrical Equipment

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- HSE guidance on PAT

Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd shall ensure that all fixed and portable electrical equipment is regularly inspected for safety and structural integrity.

Portable electrical equipment that does not move or suffer wear and tear such as PC's

Timescale	Action
Initial Installation	The appliance is inspected for integrity prior to use and then used until the next scheduled inspection
4 years from entry into service	The appliance shall be inspected and tested by a competent person
4 years from the last inspection	The appliance shall be inspected and tested by a competent person. The inspection routine shall follow the 4-yearly inspection rota until the equipment is deemed to be beyond its safe useful life expectancy.

Portable electrical appliances that are moved regularly and are likely to suffer wear and tear such as hand tools and extension cables

Timescale	Action
Initial Installation	The appliance is inspected for integrity prior to use and then used until the next scheduled inspection. It is checked by the user prior to use
12 months from entry into service	The appliance shall be inspected and tested by a competent person
12 months from the last inspection	The appliance shall be inspected and tested by a competent person. The inspection routine shall follow the 12 and 24-month inspection rota until it is deemed to be beyond its safe useful life expectancy.

Records of testing and examination shall be kept for reference.

Emergency Planning

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Josh Crackett / Seb Lacey Team Leaders /Aerial Rescuers	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- Emergency Plan

Potential problems in getting to a casualty shall be anticipated, (for example, tree climbing and the need for aerial tree rescue or the release of a casualty that has become trapped below a tree or heavy equipment).

Hazardous overhead or underground services at the worksite shall be identified prior to work being undertaken and a permit to dig received if appropriate.

Emergency contact details and site evacuation procedures that may be necessary shall be planned prior to work being undertaken. It is anticipated that these details may include:

- Site location name and if required the grid reference
- Designated meeting place (useful in remote areas to guide the emergency services to the worksite)
- Nearest access point, street name/district
- Type of access (public road / light vehicles, four-wheel drive required etc.)
- Suitable helicopter landing area
- Phone number of nearest doctor
- Location and phone number of the nearest accident and emergency hospital
- Contract Manager and client contact details

Evacuation measures shall be examined as part of the site-specific risk assessment.

If after first aid has been administered a casualty is able to walk and is near to transport or the roadside, they shall be helped to leave the area, otherwise they shall only be moved if it is absolutely necessary.

All sites must have at least two qualified emergency first aiders.

Should an accident or incident occur that requires the attendance of the emergency services, the client shall also be informed.

Reporting of accidents shall be in accordance with the Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd policy and the statutory requirements of RIDDOR shall be considered.

An accident report form shall be completed, and details copied to client as soon as reasonably practicable.

Fire Safety

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Building Regulations 2000
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002

A fire risk assessment and fire plan shall be developed using the following method:

- A plan of the premises shall be drawn.
- Significant fire hazards (ignition sources and fuel sources) shall be noted.
- The Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd standard risk assessment formula shall be applied to the findings.
- Control measures shall be introduced to reduce the risk of fire to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable.
- All staff shall be briefed in the fire safety arrangements during induction training.

The fire risk assessment and fire plan shall be available to all staff and visitors on the notice board.

Staff shall receive instruction in the use of the portable fire extinguishers during induction training including the expectations of Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd in respect of fighting fires.

As a general guide, staff are not expected to fight fires and the extinguishers are provided to assist in making an exit to the agreed assembly point.

First Aid

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to

- The Health and Safety, First Aid Regulations 1981

The company shall ensure that all staff hold a relevant industry specific emergency first aid qualification.

The most senior first aider on site shall be responsible for taking charge in the event of injury or illness.

Each office, yard and vehicle shall be equipped with suitable first aid kits appropriate to the number of people in place and the tasks they are carrying out.

Chainsaw operators must carry a large wound dressing at all times.

Health Surveillance

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

All operators shall be screened annually for signs of any adverse reaction to agents encountered during performance of their job role.

- Vibration – hand/arm vibration syndrome, carpal tunnel syndrome
- Noise – noise induced hearing loss
- Skin – irritation and dermatitis
- Dust – respiratory disorders

Screening shall be a detailed self-declaration questionnaire which shall be followed up with verbal confirmation questions from a designated manager.

Employees that are regularly exposed to a level of noise which may cause harm shall attend an annual hearing test.

Any concerning responses shall trigger referral to the operators GP or an occupational health specialist.

Heat and Cold Stress

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	All outdoor staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

During periods of hot weather operators must ensure that they remain hydrated and take frequent breaks in the shade.

Broad brimmed hats should be considered if working on a task which does not require the use of a safety helmet.

Operators shall not reduce the controls for any risk in order to increase the controls for another. This will include the wearing of front protection only chainsaw protective trousers rather than all around protection in an attempt to stay cool.

During periods of cold weather operators must ensure that they wear the layering clothing provided by the company including the wet weather outerwear if appropriate.

Staff must remain vigilant to signs that colleagues are suffering the effects of heat or cold and must deal with incidents in line with their first aid training.

Incident Reporting and Recording

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- Emergency Plan
- Incident Report Form

Definitions:

- **Undesirable circumstance** – a situation which could lead to a near miss or an accident
- **Near miss** – an unplanned, unforeseen event which could have resulted in harm or loss
- **Accident** – an unplanned, unforeseen event which resulted in harm or loss

An undesirable circumstance would be a rabbit hole seen on the worksite because someone might step in it and hurt themselves.

A near miss would be if someone is walking on site and almost steps into the rabbit hole.

An accident would be if someone steps in the rabbit hole and twists their ankle.

All undesirable circumstances, near misses and accidents must be reported as soon as they are identified to the team leader.

The team leader must manage the situation on site and seek advice / report to the office.

Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd shall report all incidents required by RIDDOR to the HSE.

All employees shall be encouraged to report near miss incidents as this will reduce the likelihood of re-occurrence, so improving safety standards.

All accidents resulting in personal injury, however minor, shall be recorded.

Investigation may be undertaken to establish the immediate and root causes.

Corrective action, the cost of corrective action, the root cause and preventive action shall be recorded.

Leptospirosis (Weils Disease)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All outdoor staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Weil's disease is a serious and sometimes fatal infection that is transmitted to humans by contact with urine from infected rats.

The disease starts with a flu-like illness with a persistent and severe headache, which can lead to vomiting and muscle pains and ultimately to jaundice, meningitis and kidney failure. In rare cases the diseases can be fatal.

People in contact with canal and river water are the most at risk but contact with material on any site where rats are present may also be a risk.

The bacteria can get into your body through cuts and scratches and through the lining of the mouth, throat and eyes after contact with infected urine or contaminated water, such as in sewers, ditches, ponds and slow-flowing rivers.

There are some easy controls which must be undertaken as routine on all worksites:

- Wash your hands after handling vegetation or any contaminated clothing and always before going to the toilet, eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Use safety glasses or better still, a visor when undertaking work where water or material could become flicked up into your face such as when using a brush-cutter.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands and wash your gloves after work.
- Always wash cuts and grazes immediately using the hand wipes in the truck and if available on the worksite, with soap and running water.
- Cover all cuts and broken skin with waterproof plasters before and during work.
- Report any illness to the office.
- When you go to the doctors, make sure that you tell them about your work.

Leptospirosis is much less severe if it is treated promptly. If your doctor decides you have leptospirosis you must tell the office so that we can report it to the Health and Safety Executive.

Lone Working

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All lone working staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference must be made to the Lone Working Procedure.

Duties such as office work, survey work and estimating may require staff to work alone.

Anyone intending to work alone must be adequately equipped and must have made appropriate arrangements for their own health, safety, and welfare prior to leaving home or the office.

When intending to undertake lone working, staff must ensure that they are equipped with items such as listed below. This list is not exhaustive, and staff must exercise common sense when preparing for the task ahead.

- All tools and equipment required to complete the proposed task
- All files, papers and maps are taken as required
- High visibility outer wear
- Safety helmet
- Safety boots if necessary or footwear appropriate to the situation
- A charged mobile phone with sufficient credit for the day
- Torch with live batteries
- Blanket
- Personal first aid kit
- Appropriately serviced car with adequate fuel reserve
- Bottle of water
- Flask of hot drink when working in cold weather
- Money

Prior to staff being deployed to work alone, an assessment of the task shall be made and a communication and checking plan shall be agreed.

Manual Handling

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

A specific risk assessment covering manual handling shall be maintained.

Information on good working techniques shall be issued to employees during induction training to ensure the risk of injury is minimised.

All staff shall receive manual handling training relevant to the tasks that they will be likely to encounter during their employment. Update training shall be undertaken as appropriate.

All staff must avoid manual handling wherever reasonably practicable to do so. Avoidance of manual handling should always be the first consideration.

If manual handling cannot be avoided, staff should consider the load, the environment, their individual capability, and the task to hand when undertaking manual handling operations.

Manual handling shall be undertaken in line with the following avoidance hierarchy:

- Does the item actually need to be moved or lifted?
- Use mechanical handling methods such as forklifts and cranes
- Use assisted handling methods such as barrows and trolleys
- Share the load with other people
- Last resort – manual handling techniques

Noise

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

The assessment of noise exposure at work and the introduction of suitable control measures are essential elements of providing a healthy work environment.

Noise-induced hearing loss can be divided into:

- Temporary hearing loss (temporary threshold shift)
- Permanent hearing loss (permanent threshold shift)

Temporary hearing loss occurs where exposure to high levels of noise results in a reduction in the sensitivity of hearing, such as is encountered after leaving a disco or pop concert. If the period of recovery is long enough, then hearing sensitivity will return to normal.

Permanent hearing loss occurs when people are exposed to high noise levels without sufficient recovery time as would be encountered through exposure in a noisy work environment. There is insufficient time for the hearing mechanism to recover from the previous exposure with the consequence that there is a gradual but definite reduction in hearing sensitivity. As the process is gradual, people do not realise that there is a change occurring until the hearing loss is significant. Noise-induced hearing loss is characterised by a marked decrease in hearing sensitivity around the 4 KHz frequency as opposed to the process of hearing loss due to age characterised by hearing loss at the higher frequencies first.

Exposure to excess noise can induce stress-related symptoms in people with a consequent lack of concentration and rise in accident rates. This can occur at levels below the first action level, and the employers should always, therefore, seek to reduce noise levels to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

- A specific assessment of the risks imposed from noise shall be undertaken
- Suitable PPE shall be issued to employees for the equipment that they operate
- Employees shall be advised about noise risks and all equipment shall be selected to reduce that risk
- All PPE and equipment shall be maintained to ensure that noise levels are kept as low as possible
- Operators shall be instructed to report events resulting in temporary threshold shift as an incident.
- Operators shall be assessed for early symptoms of noise injury using a questionnaire annually and if injury is suspected they shall be referred to an occupational health specialist for further assessment

Oil and Fuel Storage and Transport

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	All users of vehicles and petrol driven tools shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 1992
- Petroleum (Consolidation) Regulations 2014

Oils Fuels and similar substances shall be stored and transported in such a way to ensure security, no proximity to heat or naked flames as to avoid damage to the environment in the case of a spill.

Substances shall be stored:

- With like substances
- Separate to other types of substances so as to prevent any adverse reaction
- With appropriate spill control
- With appropriate flame control
- With appropriate security

Spill clean-up facilities and wash facilities shall be available close to the storage location.

Substances shall be transported:

- Away from other equipment to prevent contamination of climbing and lifting equipment
- With like substances
- Separate to other types of substances so as to prevent any adverse reaction
- In a purpose made container such as a combi-can
- In a specific box with spill control and secure closure
- Away from any contact with heat or flames

A spill kit shall be carried by all operational vehicles.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

The term 'PPE' shall cover all high visibility clothing, specific protective clothing, dust and vapour masks, helmets, eye and hearing defence, rope access and fall arrest equipment.

Employees shall be provided with PPE and safety equipment suitable for their role free of charge. In the event of wear and tear rendering the PPE ineffective, it shall be replaced free of charge. Employees are expected to look after and clean their PPE and to report any wear or defects.

Self-employed part-time staff must provide their own PPE as directed by the company. The PPE of self-employed part-time staff shall be checked before they are deployed to site.

Employees shall receive instruction on the use, maintenance, handling, and storage of the item of PPE during the issue event.

PPE shall be checked, inspected, maintained, and serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and the provisions of PUWER 1998 and LOLER 1998. A register of all equipment kept shall be maintained showing details of issue, history, servicing, and repair. All equipment shall be clearly marked to be identifiable.

Daily checks shall be carried out by employees prior to using PPE. Regular condition checks shall be carried out and recorded.

It shall be the responsibility of the employee using any equipment to report any defects in the equipment as soon as they become apparent. Arrangements shall be put in place by the manager to repair or withdraw the equipment.

Withdrawn equipment shall be clearly marked as such and shall not be used until repaired or the equipment disposed of.

Climbing arborists must wear type C chainsaw protective trousers when using a chainsaw.

Any knots used in tree climbing systems must be checked by a second competent operator prior to leaving the ground.

Respiratory Diseases

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All outdoor staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Work-related respiratory disease covers a range of illnesses that are caused or made worse by breathing in hazardous substances that damage the lungs such as dusts, fumes, and gases. The most prevalent of these diseases are chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma and silicosis.

In the tree and landscape industries we must be aware of organic toxic dust syndrome which is a severe flu-like illness that can affect operators working with or near wood chip.

Management is preventive, by limiting exposure to mouldy environments with ventilation, or by wearing respiratory protection such as facemasks.

If work involves a risk of dust operators must wear the facemask provided.

Operators must ensure that they have had instruction on how to fit the mask.

Response to Theft or Threatening Behaviour

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Staff should not attempt to challenge a thief who is in the process of taking company property.

Staff should not respond to threatening behaviour but should withdraw to a place of safety and report the incident to the office.

Staff must note the description of the offender including the registration number of any vehicle used by them.

Restricted Access

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All outdoor staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Although it is not anticipated that employees will be working in confined spaces, operations may be required in areas of restricted access, restricted headroom, and inadequate lighting.

A specific risk assessment shall be prepared for the proposed operation.

It must be ensured that operators working in areas with restricted access have adequate communication measures available. This may be voice contact with a colleague close by or by mobile phone or radio. The signal strength must be noted on the risk assessment.

Where headroom is restricted or where there are overhead features such as pipes or bulkhead lights, operators must wear a bump cap or helmet as specified by the risk assessment.

The build-up of fumes from tools or gasses from other sources such as pool chemicals must be anticipated, and an action plan prepared. The action plan must include enhanced voice contact arrangements and enhanced ventilation arrangements.

Risk Assessment

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Hazards inherent in all proposed operations shall be identified and noted. The risk shall be evaluated in terms of the likelihood of the hazard occurring and the potential severity of the consequences.

Task and machine risk assessments shall be prepared for all operations carried out by Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd and these shall be reviewed and updated as appropriate. The task and machine risk assessments shall be available at point of use for all operations.

Operators shall be informed of their responsibility to comply with the control measures specified in the task and machine risk assessments during induction training.

Site specific risk assessments shall be undertaken for each operation / site. These shall be briefed to staff at the start of each working shift and to visitors prior to them being allowed onto the work site. These shall identify potential hazards, assess the level of risk to employees, the public and the environment, specify agreed control measures and so reduce the likelihood of accidents occurring.

Employees shall have a responsibility to work in accordance with best practice and instruction in relation to any risk assessment and to inform the Directors of any situation that would result in safe working being jeopardised.

Top Handled Chainsaws

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- AA TG2 – Use of Tools in the Tree 2020

Top handled chainsaws are specialist tools for use in the crown of a tree when the cut cannot be made with a hand saw or a conventional chainsaw.

During climbing operations, a top handled chainsaw may only be used one-handed at extended reach away from the body where one hand is required to maintain a stable operating position and the saw is used with the other hand (eg while cutting at the extremities of limbs) and the cut section will free-fall to the ground. Such situations are rare, and handsaws are likely to be a more suitable alternative to allow the cut section to be controlled.

Operators must never:

- Use a top-handled chainsaw on the ground.
- ‘Hold and cut’ a section of material.

Top-handled chainsaws have two handles. To maintain proper control of the saw both handles must be used.

- Keep the saw well clear of yourself and your climbing equipment at all times.
- Ensure you obtain the best available cutting position to minimise the risk of being struck by the saw (including kickback), or by severed pieces of wood.

Incorrect, one-handed use significantly increases the risk of injury from the saw if it kicks back, skates or bounces on contact with a branch, or drops through at the end of a cut.

Traffic Management

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- The New Roads and Street Works Act
- Traffic Signs Manual

For simple traffic management activities, the signing, lighting, and guarding arrangements shall be set up by a qualified member of our team.

For complex traffic management situations, the company shall employ the services of a specialist traffic management contractor.

All staff on site shall wear a high visibility vest or jacket appropriate to the classification of the highway.

For road closures and parking suspension situations, prior arrangements shall be made with the highway's authority, the police, and the local authority as appropriate.

Vehicles

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

To reduce the risk of accidents involving the use of Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd vehicles, all drivers shall adopt the following practices:

- The journey shall be planned in advance.
- An assessment of the current state of the tiredness and fatigue of the driver shall be made prior to driving.
- An assessment of the current state of medical fitness of the driver shall be made prior to driving.
- Staff shall not drive whilst taking medication which could make them drowsy.
- Staff shall not drive after the consumption of alcohol or if it is felt that there could be a residual effect of drinking the previous evening.
- An assessment of the weather conditions shall be made.
- The condition of the vehicle shall be checked for road worthiness.
- Time shall be allowed for breaks when a long journey is anticipated.
- If drowsiness is felt the driver shall stop for a break as soon as reasonably practicable.
- The vehicle shall be driven within the speed limit, in line with the prevailing road conditions and with due courtesy to other road users.
- Mobile phones shall not be used whilst driving unless a hands-free system has been fitted and even then, the driver must pull over into a safe position to continue the call.

Vehicles shall be allocated at the discretion of the Director and must be signed out with details of:

- Date
- Time
- Mileage
- Driver
- Destination

Driving licenses of drivers shall be checked with the DVLA once every six months or more regularly if the driver is seen to be accruing penalty points.

All vehicles shall be equipped with a fire extinguisher and first aid kit; the driver shall check the location of these before using the vehicle. Missing items must be reported.

All fines for driving related offences shall be the responsibility of the individual that was driving the vehicle at the time of the incident.

The driving of tractors and other classes of vehicle shall only be carried out by suitably qualified personnel holding appropriate driving licences.

No passengers shall be carried on special purpose vehicles unless they are specifically designed to do so.

Power take off drives shall be guarded at all times when not connected to equipment and shall never be adjusted or connected whilst in motion.

Vibration

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- The Control of Vibration in the Workplace Regulations 2005

Hand-arm vibration is vibration that is transmitted into the worker's hands from hand-held machinery such as chainsaws, hedge trimmers and brush cutters or from materials which are being held whilst undergoing some form of mechanical treatment. Repeated and prolonged exposure to this type of vibration can have serious effects on a worker's health, including:

- Circulatory problems resulting in vibration white finger (VWF)
- Injuries to joints, bones, and tissues
- Nerve damage

The effects are collectively known as hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS). Sufferers may not necessarily suffer from all of the above symptoms. Vibration White Finger is the result of damage to the circulatory system. The symptoms are whitening of the fingertips, usually triggered by cold or wet conditions.

The first signs that damage is occurring is normally a sensation of 'pins and needles', or tingling sensation which is often noticed at the end of the working day. Continued exposure to vibration may result in increasingly frequent attacks accompanied by numbness and whitening of the tips of the fingers or 'blanching'. Continued exposure results in considerable enlargement of the affected area.

The whitening is often accompanied by numbness and pins and needles. The colour may change to a reddening of the area as blood returns to the affected area, normally accompanied by severe pain. As the condition is often triggered by the cold or wet conditions, this can have a severe impact on a person's social and leisure life

Damage may manifest itself as pains to the soft tissue and bones in the hands, wrists, or arms as well as a general loss of strength in these areas. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is a reportable disease when associated with hand-held vibrating equipment. Damage to the nerves in the hands can result in a loss of sensation and permanent numbness or tingling sensation. Dexterity and the manipulation of small objects may become difficult or impossible and again, this can have a severe impact on the employee's social and leisure life.

The company shall ensure that the following controls are in place:

1. A specific assessment of the risks imposed from vibration shall be undertaken.
2. Work methods that eliminate or reduce exposure shall be used.
3. Modern tools with anti-vibration systems shall be provided. Comparative vibration emission levels shall be a factor in the purchase of new equipment.
4. Training and assessment shall include information and testing on maintaining a correct stance and grip when using equipment.
5. Vibration levels shall be investigated and logged so that the maximum trigger times can be planned. The company maintains a spreadsheet which lists all handheld power tools alongside their vibration level as specified by the manufacturer, the EAV and the ELV.
 - Vibration values were taken from the manufacturer's vibration data sheets and the times to reach the EAV and the ELV were established using the Stihl vibration calculator.
 - A 10% factor of safety uplift has been applied to the vibration levels stated by the manufacturer to account for chain sharpening and machine wear and tear.
 - No reduction has been applied for situations where the saw is being supported by the timber using the timber dogs or when using the saw in a horizontal position whilst dismantling a large stem as this was thought to be the safest option.

Inventory				Vibration			
Description	Type	Manufacturers Serial Number	Issued to	Vibration Value A(8) [m/s/s]	Vibration Output Factor of Safety Formula	Time to reach 2.5M/S/S Exposure Action Value	Time to reach 5M/S/S Exposure Limit Value
				Take the highest level given by the manufacturer	The vibration value with an uplift of 10% to account for increased vibration due to age, wear and tear	Hours of Trigger Time given the uplifted vibration magnitude until measures must be taken	Hours of Trigger Time given the uplifted vibration magnitude
Chainsaw	Stihl MS150			4.9	5.4	Action - 1h 43m	Limit - 6h 52m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS150			4.9	5.4	Action - 1h 43m	Limit - 6h 52m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS151 TC-E			4.9	5.4	Action - 1h 43m	Limit - 6h 52m
Chainsaw (Battery Powered)	Stihl MSA 120 C-B			3.4	3.7	Action - 3h 39m	Limit - 14h 37m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS170			6.9	7.6	Action - 52m	Limit - 3h 28m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS201			2.7	3.0	Action - 5h 40m	Limit - 22h 40m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS201TC-E			3.5	3.9	Action - 3h 22m	Limit - 13h 30m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS261			2.4	2.6	Action - 7h 24m	Limit - > 24h
Chainsaw	Stihl MS362 C			3.5	3.9	Action - 3h 22m	Limit - 13h 30m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS441			3.3	3.6	Action - 3h 48m	Limit - 15h 11m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS461			4	4.4	Action - 2h 35m	Limit - 10h 20m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS500			4.2	4.6	Action - 2h 21m	Limit - 9h 22m
Chainsaw	Stihl MS661			6.9	7.6	Action - 52m	Limit - 3h 28m

The green and red colour codes shown in columns I and J relate to the green or red labels that have been applied to powered hand tools.

6. Suitable PPE shall be issued to employees for the equipment that they operate.
7. Employees shall be advised about vibration risks during induction training or as a toolbox talk and reminded to report events resulting in tingling hands as an incident.
8. All PPE and equipment shall be maintained to ensure that vibration levels are kept as low as possible.
9. Operators joining the company shall be assessed for symptoms of vibration injury using a tier 1 questionnaire and if injury is suspected they shall be referred to an occupational health specialist for further assessment.
10. Operators shall be assessed for early symptoms of vibration injury using a tier 2 questionnaire annually and if injury is suspected they shall be referred to an occupational health specialist for further assessment.
11. Completed assessment forms shall be analysed by a manager and further advice sought if required.
12. Managers shall plan the task and allocate resources to ensure that there are sufficient team members so that no one person will be exposed to a level of vibration which is likely to cause injury. Operators shall be instructed to share the tasks around the team to avoid any person being exposed to a level of vibration above the ELV. This shall be done by allocating a day category code to the proposed work.
13. A label shall be fixed to all hand tools that emit vibration with details of the times taken to reach the exposure action value and the exposure limit value. Green labels are used for low risk and red for high vibration tools:

	Tools that when used in combination with any other green tools throughout the day, would not present a vibration hazard.
	Tools that when used on their own or in combination with any other tool whether green or red, may present a hazard if the total vibration exposure time of all tools in combination is greater than the ELV stated on tool with the highest vibration output.

For example:

Action - 6h 30m Limit - 12h 15m

Action - 0h 30m Limit - 5h 15m

Using this system, all operators know that if they use any tool with a red label, their powered tools use during that day must not exceed the ELV time on the tool with the red label.

Operators also know that the exposure time only includes the periods where they were using the tool for a task.

For example, the operator may be undertaking work using the tools for 8 hours but the time exposed to vibration was only 1 hour because their usage comprised of many very short duration periods of operating the trigger.

Using the data gathered above, hypothetical working days were calculated so that managers could easily establish if the proposed task would have a high vibration risk rating.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
		Vibration Exposure Time						
Vibration Output including the 10% factor of safety		Top Haedled Chainsaw ~ 5.4m/s/s	Medium Ground Saw ~ 3m/s/s	Large Chainsaw ~ 6.2m/s/s	Hand Held Leaf Blower ~ 2.75m/s/s	Hedge Trimmer ~ 3m/s/s	Daily Exposure Total	Action Required
~ EAV		1 hour 43 minutes	5 hours 40 minutes	1 hour 20 minutes	6 hours 37 minutes	5 hours 16 minutes	If < 2.5m/s/s in 24 hours	None
~ ELV		6 hours 53 minutes	22 hours 40 minutes	5 hours 16 minutes	> 24 hours	> 24 hours	If > 2.5m/s/s in 24 hours	Generic controls
If > 5m/s/s in 24 hours								Not acceptable
Normal tree surgery day example								
A	Climbing Arborist	40 minutes	20 minutes		20 minutes		1.8m/s/s	None
	Ground Chainsaw Operator		40 minutes		20 minutes		1.1m/s/s	None
	Chipper Operator				20 minutes		0.6m/s/s	None
Heavy tree surgery day example								
B	Climbing Arborist	40 minutes	40 minutes	40 minutes			2.5m/s/s	Generic Controls
	Ground Chainsaw Operator		40 minutes	40 minutes	40 minutes		2.1m/s/s	None
	Chipper Operator		40 minutes		40 minutes		1.2m/s/s	None
Hedge trimming day example								
C	Operator 1				20 minutes	2 hours	1.6m/s/s	None
	Operator 2				20 minutes	2 hours	1.6m/s/s	None
	Operator 3				20 minutes	2 hours	1.6m/s/s	None
Ringing up with a large chainsaw example								
D	Operator 1			2 hours	20 minutes		3.2m/s/s	Generic controls
	Operator 2			2 hours	20 minutes		3.2m/s/s	Generic controls
	Operator 3			2 hours	20 minutes		3.2m/s/s	Generic controls

The following colour coding has been assigned to the scenarios shown above according to the total exposure calculated for each operator and the likely tool usage throughout the working day.

Likely Daily Vibration Exposure (m/s ²) for any individual	Control Measures
<p style="text-align: center;">< 2.5</p> <p>Daily vibration exposure is below the EAV.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no need for further measures to reduce exposure.
<p style="text-align: center;">2.5 to 5</p> <p>Daily vibration exposure is above the EAV but below the ELV.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an increased risk of developing vibration related conditions for the operator. Generic Controls MUST be applied
<p style="text-align: center;">> 5</p> <p>Daily vibration exposure exceeds the ELV.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff must not operate any combination of tools beyond the 5m/s/s limit. Reduce daily work time and/or use machine with lower equivalent vibration level. Generic Controls MUST be applied Time Limits MUST be applied to reduce the likely exposure to below 5m/s/s when planning the work.

Welfare

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- The Workplace (Health, Safety, and Welfare) Regulations 1992

Offices and workshops shall have suitable welfare facilities including toilets, wash facilities and an area to take breaks and lunch.

For short duration work on site 'local arrangements' shall be made, and these arrangements shall be included on the daily briefing sheet and the method statement.

For example:

- *Toilet and washing facilities are available in the downstairs cloakroom of the customer's house.*
- *Toilet and washing facilities are available at the McDonalds on the High Street – 100 metres to the south of the worksite.*

For longer duration sites, facilities shall be provided on site or arrangements shall be made to share the facilities of the main contractor.

Work at Height (WAH)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	Certified operators as listed on the competence matrix

Reference shall be made to:

- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005
- AA ICoP – Tree Work at Height 2020
- AA TG1 – Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue 2020
- AA TG2 – Use of Tools in the Tree 2020
- AA TG3 – Rigging and Dismantling
- AA TG4 – Use of Mobile Cranes in Tree Work 2020
- AA TG5 – Use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms in Tree Work 2020

All risks from working at height shall be assessed and work at height shall not be undertaken if the task can be safely and appropriately carried out from a position on the ground.

The first stage in planning any work at height shall be to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks posed by the operation.

The risk assessment shall determine whether the benefits of carrying out the work outweigh the risks.

The overall process that shall be followed is:

1. Avoid the risk.
2. Prevent falls from occurring.
3. Reduce the effects of any fall.

If work has to be done at height, then suitable and sufficient measures shall be taken to prevent persons falling a distance where they are liable to be injured.

When a proficient operator is using personal fall protection systems for tree climbing, it is expected that there will be a backup system to prevent them falling a distance that is likely to cause injury if the primary system (including the main line, components, or anchor) were to fail. The backup should be attached to an independent anchor where possible.

Arboricultural work shall be planned, organised, supervised, and undertaken in line with the following hierarchy:

1. Avoid the risks of working at height by achieving the desired results using a machine such as a forest harvester, an excavator with a tree shear or grapple saw head.
2. Avoid the risks of working at height by achieving the desired results from the ground.
3. Achieve the desired results using pole pruners, pole saws and pole mounted chainsaws.
4. Minor (small diameter) pruning works and hedge trimming operations may be undertaken from tripod steps or purpose-built platform.
5. Access the crown of the tree using a MEWP.
6. Access the crown of the tree using approved personal fall protection systems as described in TG1. A secured ladder may be used to assist access into the crown.

Account shall also be taken of:

- The risks that need to be managed.
- The distances that need to be negotiated by access and egress equipment.
- The distances and consequences of a potential fall.
- The duration and frequency of use.
- The need for easy and timely evacuation.
- The requirement for rescue.
- The working conditions.

Only equipment that is appropriate to the nature of the proposed work shall be used.

All tree climbing, and work positioning shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the requirements of the TG1 Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue published by the Arboricultural Association.

MEWP operators shall hold a certificate of competence for the use of a MEWP.

MEWPs shall be used in accordance with the requirements of TG5 Use of MEWPs in Arboriculture (Arboricultural Association)

The MEWP shall be equipped with a physical barrier to separate the MEWP operator from the chainsaw operator if two people are to work in the basket.

The MEWP operator (and the chainsaw operator) shall be secured to the basket using a harness and lanyard to prevent falling from the basket. This will be a work restraint system rather than a fall arrest system due to the risk of injury from branches in the distance it takes the fall arrest equipment to deploy and arrest the fall.

Any team allocated work at height using arboricultural climbing and work positioning systems shall have more than one competent tree climber in order that an aerial rescue can be undertaken if required.

Stable step ladders shall be used for access to height when working in the office. The steps must be footed by a co-worker.

Tasks may be accessing high shelves or writing on the upper part of the noticeboard.

Work Equipment (PUWER)

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Sebastian Lacey Team Leader	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

The term 'equipment' shall cover all tools, plant, vehicles, and machinery used in the course of Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd business.

Equipment shall only be used for the purpose it was designed for in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All guards must remain in place and be functioning correctly. No modifications shall be carried out unless under the instructions of the manufacturer. Essential details and warning signs shall be in place at all times.

Equipment shall be checked, inspected, maintained, and serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and the provisions of PUWER and LOLER. A register of all equipment kept shall be maintained showing details of history, servicing, and repair. All equipment shall be clearly marked to be identifiable.

Daily checks shall be carried out by employees prior to using the equipment. Periodic maintenance checks shall be carried out and recorded.

It is the responsibility of the employee using any equipment to report any defects in the equipment as soon as they become apparent. Arrangements shall be put in place by the manager to repair or withdraw the equipment.

Withdrawn equipment shall be clearly marked as such and shall not be used until repaired or the equipment disposed of.

Rules in relation to plant and equipment:

- The estimator shall specify the equipment to be used for the proposed work.
- Only the equipment as specified on the job sheet shall be used. If further equipment is required, the team leader must seek authorisation from the office.
- Employees shall not operate any machine unless they have been trained and authorised to do so.
- Operators must not interfere with or remove guarding on any piece of equipment.
- Any faults, damage, defects, or malfunctions must be reported to a manager as soon as they are discovered.
- Operators must not attempt any maintenance on any machine unless they are trained and authorised to do so.
- Cleaning or maintenance must not be undertaken unless the machine has been shut down and the power isolated. On self-powered equipment the key must be removed.
- Machinery must not be left unattended whilst it is in motion.
- All employees must observe all pedestrian and vehicle controls throughout the premises.

Working Time

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

An agreement to opt out of the working hour's limitations, which are 48 hours per week averaged over a 17-week period, is available and can be voluntarily signed by employees who wish to work more than the specified limited hours in the regulations.

Any employee who signs this opt out agreement shall be able to terminate the agreement by giving written notice of their wish to do so.

Workplace Arrangements

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

A specific risk assessment covering the office, workshop and yard shall be maintained.

The office shall be kept in a safe and clean condition with no trip hazards or obstructions that could cause harm or prevent emergency access / egress.

Workspaces and display screen equipment shall be assessed for suitability for the specific user and these assessments shall be reviewed or repeated regularly to ensure continuing suitability.

All staff and visitors to wear a high viz jacket/vest and safety footwear in the yard and workshop.

All staff and visitors shall be kept informed of fire evacuation procedures and first aid provision arrangements.

All employees shall have access to relevant safety information and first aid provision.

All staff and visitors must comply with all warning signs and notices displayed on the premises.

All staff and visitors shall make appropriate use of all safety equipment and facilities.

All work areas must be kept clear of debris, scrap, and other rubbish in order to facilitate ready access and egress and to reduce the risk of fire.

Working in Proximity to Water

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Daniel Burton Managing Director	All outdoor staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

The company shall ensure that records show who can and cannot swim and the extent to which the employee is competent to swim.

All staff deployed to work in the proximity of deep water shall be able to swim and shall wear self-inflating buoyancy aids for the duration of the work.

Specific safeguards shall be in place for staff engaged in lone working duties near to water. These safeguards shall be specified in the risk assessment.

Young Persons

Responsible Person	Competent Person	Proficient Operator
Daniel Burton Managing Director	Rebecca Burton Operations Director	All staff shall be briefed on these arrangements

Reference shall be made to:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Working Time Regulations 1998 as amended 2002
- Risk assessment for young workers

Young persons are often exposed to risks to their health and safety when at work as a consequence of their immaturity, lack of experience or absence of awareness of existing or potential risks.

A risk assessment has been prepared which considers the general fact that they are at greater risk because of their possible lack of awareness of existing or potential risks, immaturity, and inexperience.